

ASHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING REPORT

ASHA's Board of Directors (BOD) met in person on February 2–3, 2024. The following are highlights of the Board's discussions.

PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS

President Tena McNamara convened the BOD meeting at 8:30 a.m. ET on February 2, 2024, and welcomed Board members to the first BOD meeting of 2024.

CEO UPDATE

In addition to providing the written summary with the pre-meeting materials, Chief Executive Officer Vicki Deal-Williams shared the following:

Support for Members Working in School Settings

Working with the National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services (NCPSSERS), ASHA hosted a virtual Town Hall on Personnel Shortages in Special Education. The event focused on strategies to address critical shortages in education that involve developing Grow Your Own (GYO) programs. Following this event, a [Grow Your Own School-Based SLP or SLPA Program](#) webpage was developed to provide information and resources to ASHA members who may be interested in developing GYO programs in their school districts.

On January 24, ASHA held a joint virtual town hall with the National Education Association (NEA) in response to concerns expressed during ASHA's School Issues Advisory Board (SIAB) 2022 Regional Listening sessions. The event—Partnering with Teachers Unions to Improve Working Conditions in Schools—featured a panel that included senior staff from the NEA and SLPs from across the country. The core tenets for this engagement were the following: to assist school-based members with understanding the distinct roles of the professional association and teachers unions; to provide strategies for becoming involved in organized labor, foster a stronger community, and promote shared goals; and to provide support for school-based members who work in “right to work” states that lack strong unions.

There were 355 attendees. ASHA resources (including the updated [Teachers Unions webpage](#)) were highlighted and shared to support attendees with understanding the collective bargaining process, and data were provided to share during union negotiations. During the event, there was an overwhelming interest in forming a group to continue the conversation and share information and resources. To that end, ASHA has created a new Online Community to provide members with a platform for sharing strategies to improve communication and collaboration with their unions.

ASHA continues to work tirelessly for members working in school settings, and at the same time to empower members with the information and resources to advocate for themselves and the clients and students they serve. To that end, the following virtual town hall event series will be conducted throughout 2024:

- **Compensation Conversation—What SLPs in Schools Need to Know About Negotiating Salaries:** March 6
- **The Road Ahead—Postsecondary Transition Planning for Adolescents:** May 15
- **Workload Management Strategies—Implementing Service Delivery Models in Schools:** August 28
- **School Safety—A Townhall for Educational Audiologists and SLPs:** October 16

- **Ensuring Equity—Unpacking Disproportionality in Speech-Language Services:**
December 11

ASHA will also be hosting two online conferences for SLPs in schools in 2024:

- Working Together in Schools: Whole Child, Whole Team (July)
Providing strategies and resources to promote effective teamwork to support student performance.
- Using a Strengths-Based Approach in Schools (October)
Focused on identifying a students' strengths in assessment and intervention to improve outcomes and generalization of skills into the classroom setting and beyond.

ASHA has also developed a new webpage for SLPs in schools addressing [salary and compensation](#). The resource provides information on how to negotiate compensation, tips for advocating for salary supplements, compensation considerations based on type of employer, and success stories of members who have advocated for increased salaries.

2023 Convention

The 2023 Convention marked ASHA's highest attendance since 2020, with an attendance of 14,442 in-person attendees that included 356 exhibitors, 350+ student volunteers, and 3,400+ first-timers.

The theme of the 2023 Convention, "Igniting Innovation," permeated the event. Leading into Convention and on-site, attendees had the opportunity to undergo an Innovation Assessment, personalizing their experience by adorning their lanyards with corresponding buttons reflecting their results. This not only facilitated self-discovery of innovation strengths but also fostered networking among participants. Co-Chairs of the 2023 Convention Program Committee, Jennifer Simpson, and Kelly Farquharson, showcased their innovation on Thursday morning, premiering a custom music video with lyrics tailored to the community.

Building on the virtual experiences of the past years, the 2023 Convention introduced Virtual Extra, an online platform providing access to a comprehensive collection of iPosters, Technicals, Technical Demos, and up to six live-streamed sessions per timebank, including both the opening general session and the presentation of the Annie Award. Notably, all components of Virtual Extra were open access, with CEUs available exclusively to Full Conference participants and the 1,400+ Virtual-Only registrants.

On-site attendees had access to over 2,600 sessions, 7 info booths, 28 overflow theaters, demo stages in the Exhibit Hall, almost 1,200 iPosters, and 6,000+ presenting and nonpresenting authors. Over 118,000 hours of continuing education were claimed for CE credit, with an exceptionally high rating of 4.4 (out of 5) for overall satisfaction, slightly surpassing the ratings of 2021 and 2022.

2024 Convention

The 2024 ASHA Convention will take place in Seattle, Washington December 5–7. This location, and the dates, present both opportunities and some challenges, and the Convention and Meetings Team is already hard at work thinking about interesting and creative opportunities for participation—for attendees and exhibitors alike—in Seattle.

Convention Co-Chairs Kimberly Ward (AuD) and Jerrold Jackson (SLP) have set the theme of the Convention as “Elevate,” building on the successful 2023 Convention theme of Innovation. In their own words, “We’ve been ignited to innovate, and now it’s time to elevate those ideas” and highlight advancements in practice, research, and teaching; future-forward thinking on engagement and interactions; intentionally improving our big picture view by reaching new heights in technology, interprofessional relations, culturally responsive practices, and consumer (patient/client/student/families) outcomes; and more.

Interstate Compact

The Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC) is looking forward to the 2024 legislative sessions. Wisconsin adopted the Compact in late 2023, making it the 30th member state. The Commission’s Executive Committee also hired an Executive Director to see to day-to-day operations of the Commission. The Executive Committees from the ASLP-IC, the OT Compact, and the Counseling Compact will be reviewing proposals for development of the data system required to issue privileges to practice and finalize selection of a vendor for this work.

ASHA’s State Affairs Team Restructure

ASHA’s state affairs team has undergone a restructure of the approach to advocacy work. The state team had been using a state-focused model with state liaisons. Moving forward, the state team will utilize an issue-based model to engage in proactive advocacy in the states and enhanced support of state associations.

2024 Dues Renewal

As of January 2024, 87% of ASHA members and affiliates renewed their membership for 2024, which is a 2.9% increase compared to last year.

Assistant Certification Programs

There continues to be steady growth in the assistant certification program at ASHA, which certified its 1,000th assistant at the end of January. In addition to more individuals receiving the C-AA or C-SLPA daily, there are now 15 states that align with or recognize the C-SLPA certification/certification standards as a part of their license or registration requirements for SLP assistants. ASHA staff are also working with volunteer subject matter experts to create model education programs for 2-year and 4-year SLPA programs, which should be available in the third quarter of 2024.

Certification Administration

In 2023, applications for ASHA certification were up 15% from 2022. Certificant retention for 2023 was over 95% for audiologists and 98% for SLPs, and 2024 renewals are on a similar path to that of previous years. ASHA attributes the continued growth and extremely high retention to the fact that certificants and stakeholders continue to highly prefer and value ASHA certification.

ASHA Stream – 10 most popular videos of 2023

TOP 10 Videos for 2023	Plays	Minutes Watched
Moving Forward Together: 2023 New Year's Message from ASHA's CEO	3,308	10,466
ASHA Ethics Process FAQ	914	4,476
The Why, What, and How of Interprofessional Collaboration	247	3,592

Technology & Accessibility for Communication: Apple	226	3,043
A Message of Appreciation from ASHA President Robert Augustine	1,053	2,846
Creating Community. Supporting Students: ASHA Schools Connect 2023	1,105	2,571
Steve and Michel Gleason Receive 2022 Annie Glenn Award	206	2,407
Interprofessional Practice (IPP) in Action	656	2,275
Serving Clients from Diverse Backgrounds: Speech-Language Difference vs. Disorder	268	1,984
ASHA 101	878	1,939

REORIENTATION OF BOD RESPONSIBILITIES

President Tena McNamara provided a review of the BOD responsibilities to ensure responsiveness to the association’s needs and adhere to best practices in association governance. Areas reviewed with the BOD were ASHA’s mission and vision; participation in decision-making, including discussions and voting; a review of the BOD members roles; and the importance of BOD members acting as ambassadors for ASHA, including representing its interests and advocating to advance its mission and goals.

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENT: FIDUCIARY DUTIES REVIEW

At the beginning of every year ASHA’s BOD is provided an overview of their legal and fiduciary responsibilities to ensure that they fully understand the responsibilities of serving on the board of an organization of ASHA’s size and complexity. The presentation was made by an attorney with ASHA’s legal counsel.

STRATEGIC PATHWAY UPDATE

An update on ASHA's Strategic Pathway to Excellence was provided and comprised four distinct segments.

The initial two segments were dedicated to reviewing the Annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the nine Strategic Objectives. These KPIs serve as short-term performance metrics, evaluating the success of major objectives or focus areas for the year. The Strategic Objective Owners identified one to three KPIs for 2023, and their end-of-year statuses were presented in the first segment. The second segment introduced the new set of KPIs for 2024.

The third segment provided a review of accomplished tasks in 2023 to initiate the development of the next iteration of the Strategic Pathway. With the current plan concluding in 2025, the Board of Directors engaged in structured planning activities to create the next version of the Pathway. The presentation offered background information for new BOD members and a look at the transition that will occur over the next two years to finalize the current plan and ramp up work on the new iteration.

In the final segment, significant accomplishments and changes were reported for current Strategic Objectives. A detailed account of ongoing work and a comprehensive description of achievements to date can be accessed on ASHA.org, Strategic Pathway to Excellence: [Strategic Objective Highlights](#), updated biannually.

Vice President for Planning Akilah R. Heggs was joined by Chief Executive Officer Vicki Deal-Williams and Senior Director of the Office of Business Excellence Rozsa Felix to provide this update to BOD members.

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE AND THE 2024 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

An informational presentation on the political climate in Congress and states, issues ASHA will focus on in 2024, and strategies for achieving advocacy goals was provided by Vice President for Government Affairs and Public Policy Deborah Ross Swain and Senior Director for Advocacy Communications and Operations Michelle Hostler. The importance of getting more ASHA members involved in advocacy was stressed, noting that elected officials need to hear from their constituents to better understand the issues impacting the professions and the people served. The Government Affairs and Public Policy Board develops the annual Public Policy Agenda (PPA), based on member input, which identifies ASHA's advocacy priorities for the year. The [2024 PPA](#) highlights information about ASHA's advocacy efforts and how to partner with the association.

MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP SATISFACTION TREND DATA

The Association has been experiencing consistent growth in its member and affiliate populations. As of the end of 2022, ASHA's membership count was 228,368, with an overall retention rate of 97.7% (96.0% for audiologists and 98.0% for SLPs) from the previous year. ASHA continues to focus heavily on member satisfaction, most recently through the lens of the Member Value Proposition project and the ongoing development and implementation of a unified content strategy. Official 2023 membership counts will be available by March 2024. Senior Director of Data Analytics, Evan Reid, provided this update to the BOD on ASHA membership trends, retention, and satisfaction data.

NAHSA REDEVELOPMENT

As the consumer affiliate of ASHA, the National Association for Hearing and Speech Action (NAHSA) is the sole organization focused on educating the public about communication health. In 2022, the BOD decided to amplify NAHSA's reach and position it to become the preeminent national consumer organization educating the public on issues related to communication sciences and disorders. Chief Staff Officer for Communications Selena A. Ramkeesoon and Senior Director, Public Relations Joe Cerquone provided an update on redevelopment activities and answered BOD members' questions. Work will continue throughout 2024 and beyond, to implement necessary changes to NAHSA.

FOLLOW-UP ON SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION

The Board of Directors reviewed the current clinical specialty certification program, results from the specialty certification survey, and specialty credentialing examples from other allied health professions. The ASHA Vice Presidents for Standards and Ethics Carol Dudding and Mark DeRuiter will exchange information with the Council for Clinical Certification in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology (CFCC) at their meeting, February 8–10, 2024.

GENERATIVE DISCUSSION: SHIFTING TERRAIN FOR ADVOCACY

ASHA's BOD engages in generative discussions at each BOD meeting. These discussions are intended to engage the Board in deliberations that inform their decision-making and help to define issues and frame challenges.

In the United States, division in the House and Senate, the shift in power between Congress and regulators, and conflicts among federal, state, and local governments are changing the nature of policymaking. National-level gridlock in Congress will drive more efforts at policy change toward state and city governments. All of this will change the arena in which advocacy happens.

At this meeting, Chief Staff Officer for Speech-Language Pathology Lemmietta McNeilly facilitated a discussion where the BOD considered the ways the association will need to navigate advocacy efforts amidst these political shifts and how the association will mitigate risks to our advocacy priorities.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

ASHA's financial report was presented by Vice President of Finance Lawrence (Larry) Molt. He reported on the preliminary December 31, 2023, report, which showed total operating revenue of \$69,850,290 and total operating expenses of \$69,452,699, equating to preliminary net revenue (revenue minus expenses) of \$397,591. The BOD also approved a resolution that the 2025 ASHA dues and fees will increase, and the certification application fees will decrease. The last time that ASHA's dues increased was in 2010.

AUDIOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BOD Audiology Subcommittee met on February 2, 2024, as a part of the February BOD meeting with Board Member At Large for Audiology Anita Vereb facilitating. The following topics were discussed:

An update was provided about ongoing audiology-related advocacy, particularly focusing on the Medicare Audiology Access Improvement Act (MAAIA). This bill continues to have strong bipartisan support, with 20 co-sponsors in the House and 10 co-sponsors in the Senate. Advocacy efforts continue in broadening bill sponsorship and seeking endorsements from other organizations. Additionally, the subcommittee received updates on ASHA's advocacy work around Medicare Part B Payment Reduction under the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule (MPFS) and changes in hearing coverage in the Federal Employee Plan (Blue Cross/Blue Shield). ASHA Senior Director, Federal & Political Affairs Jerry White presented to the subcommittee and answered their questions.

ASHA Senior Director, Audiology Practices Tricia Ashby provided an update regarding ASHA's involvement with the [Hearing Loss Project](#) and the addition of a "[hearing screening widget](#)" to the ASHA public page. This tool can be used by consumers, linking them to ASHA certified audiologists who have joined [ASHA ProFind](#).

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The BOD Speech-Language Pathology Subcommittee met on February 2, 2024, with Board Member at Large in Speech-Language Pathology Treasyri Williams Wood facilitating.

The session commenced with a succinct overview of the primary purpose of subcommittee gatherings.

The meeting was dedicated to an in-depth discussion about the state of clinical externships and practicum experiences in speech-language pathology graduate programs. The discussion unearthed critical considerations, including recommendations rooted in collaborative processes, research-practice partnerships, and community-based learning. Notably, there were concerns expressed about terminology used to describe "soft skills" that perhaps should be recognized as professional or occupational competencies.

The discourse expanded to explore the complexities of faculty recognition and incentives for desired practices. The discussion included suggestions for transparent KPIs for program evaluation and for establishing professional development hubs. A compelling proposal emerged to encourage faculty to develop a shared framework for key competencies, fostering consistency across academic institutions. The subcommittee also delved into the integration of functional skills as prerequisites for matriculation, reflecting a commitment to advancing and aligning speech-language pathology programs with evolving industry needs.

Moving forward, the subcommittee is poised to review and digest the report from the Ad Hoc Committee to Plan Next Steps to Redesign Entry-Level Education for Speech-Language Pathologists, which includes recommendations related to this topic.

REVIEW OF BOD OPERATING PROCEDURES

ASHA's BOD operating procedures outline BOD responsibilities in the areas of planning, operations, audit, and communications; guidelines for conducting business via an asynchronous electronic meeting; relationship of the BOD to the National Office staff; policies restricting BOD members in being elected, appointed, or selected for a BOD office in any year during which they serve on the BOD; voting guidelines for BOD resolutions and motions; and the process to be followed should a BOD member have a conflict of interest. President Tena McNamara and Chief Executive Officer Vicki Deal-Williams engaged BOD members about the operating procedures.

NSSLHA Update

An update on the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association's (NSSLHA) governance, activities, and upcoming programs for students was provided by NSSLHA's National Advisor Belinda Daugherty.

- In December 2023, National NSSLHA approved their new [2024–2026 Strategic Plan](#).
- The NSSLHA Member Honors applications are now open through March 31. The awards recognize students and provide cash prizes between \$250 and \$500. Information about Member Honors is available at <https://www.nsslha.org/programs/member-honors/>.
- Student leadership applications are open and will close April 12. This includes positions on the NSSLHA Executive Council, Student State Officer positions, and the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Action Work Group. Additional information is available at <https://www.nsslha.org/student-leadership/>.
- National NSSLHA has a number of virtual events planned for the spring. Additional information about upcoming virtual events is available at <https://www.nsslha.org/programs/virtual-events/>.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES PROCESS

The BOD has been working intentionally to increase the diversity of committees, boards, and councils (CBCs) with regard to dimensions such as age, profession, gender, employment setting, and number of individuals from underrepresented racial/ethnic backgrounds. A review of the commitments that the BOD made and their potential to impact outcomes in appointments the Board members will make later this year for vacancies on CBCs that begin in 2025 were presented by President-Elect Ann (Bernadette) Mayfield-Clarke and Chief Staff Officer for Multicultural Affairs Megan-Brette Hamilton. The BOD was urged to build on the progress and momentum of their efforts over the past several years by encouraging individuals across a variety of dimensions of diversity to submit requests for consideration via [the Committee/Board Interest Form](#), including individuals who are early career professionals, those from underrepresented racial/ethnic backgrounds, former officers of National NSSLHA, and those who have participated in ASHA's leadership development programs (i.e., the Leadership Development Program and the Minority Student Leadership Program).

Q&A SESSION

The following topics were posted prior to the BOD meeting for review by each BOD member, with the opportunity to provide feedback or have questions answered during the BOD meeting.

InTouch Report

[InTouch Forms](#) and member feedback are summarized monthly and reviewed with the BOD at Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Subcommittee meetings and at each BOD meeting. InTouch Forms

received from members since the last BOD meeting, along with a cumulative summary of the messages, were shared prior to the meeting. Chief Staff Officer for Communications Selena A. Ramkeesoon answered BOD members' questions regarding topics covered in the InTouch forms. Emerging issues and trends that require consideration by the BOD or select CBCs were also reviewed.

Report (Ad Hoc Committee to Plan Next Steps to Redesign Entry-Level Education for Speech-Language Pathologists)

The BOD received the resolution to accept the final report of Ad Hoc Committee to Plan Next Steps to Redesign Entry-Level Education for Speech-Language Pathologists. A general orientation was provided to share key aspects of the Committee's work and the report's organizational structure. At the next Board meeting in June, the BOD will discuss the report and consider recommendations.

SIG Task Force Update

An update was provided on the work of the Special Interest Group Program Review Task Force (SIG-TF) that has been charged to examine the current SIG program. The SIG-TF will consider all aspects of the SIG program including financial resources, human resources, IT resources, affiliate benefits, features of SIGs, scholarly publications, continuing education, advocacy, and leadership opportunities.

The SIG-TF includes volunteers and ASHA staff members. It is charged with (1) examining the current SIG program to determine elements that should be maintained, changed, or eliminated, including an evaluation of the pros and cons of *Perspectives*; (2) exploring alternatives for optimizing member connections and community; and (3) making recommendations for creating a sustainable, scalable, and cost-effective member benefit that establishes community in alignment with strategies to enhance member value and content strategy. The Task Force will produce recommendations to the Board of Directors about how ASHA members can share experiences and best practices in the future. These recommendations will acknowledge and address constraints on time, money, and resources. Vice President for Audiology Practice Janice Trent provided the update and led discussion.

The Board of Directors meeting was adjourned on February 3 at 3:00 p.m. ET.